

A New Badge of Courage | Iraq: For the Children's Future

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

September 2005
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Soldiers

Training
Today's
Soldiers at
NTC
JRTC
CMTC





Cover Story — Page 6
A Soldier prepares to engage
“insurgents” during a skirmish at
the National Training Center at
Fort Irwin, Calif.
— Photo by Beth Reece

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Brings Smiles*



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The Combat Action Badge recognizes Soldiers from all parts of the Army who bravely face enemy action.

TRAINING TODAY'S SOLDIERS AT . . .

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WITH nearly half the Soldiers on active duty now deployed or forward-stationed in more than 120 countries, the magazine staff has been focused on operations in many of those areas – most recently in our August issue where we highlighted Army missions in the Horn of Africa and operations in the Republic of Georgia.

This month, we turn our focus to the institutional Army, specifically the combat-training centers that develop and maintain individual and collective skills, and contribute to the doctrine, research and activities that build the Army's professional knowledge base.

The National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., and the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, each play a distinct role in preparing units to fight the war on terrorism,

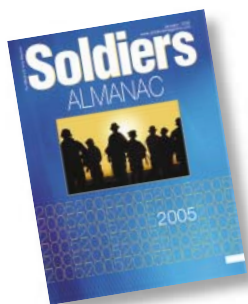


but they also share common traits. Each center strives to make its training as tough and realistic as possible, based on doctrine, lessons learned and the tactical skills that the centers' cadre have

learned through direct exposure to hostile fire.

As one cadre member put it, units now leaving the training centers most likely will deploy directly to a hazardous area, so trainers "must ensure that they are as good at their jobs as they can possibly be."

Gil High
Gil High
Editor in Chief



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Respect for Females

IN the July issue, a female NCO from Fort Drum responded to a March message from the Army leadership about the role of women in the military, and she brought to light an issue that plagues both sexes. My interpretation is that she feels that she is not being supported as a female NCO. Here is my suggestion for dealing with this.

The first rule of thumb as an NCO is "When in charge, take charge and lead by example." I am one of those "old timers" who feels that Soldiers are being promoted ahead of their capabilities and maturity, and this is definitely an example of such.

If she strongly feels that she is being harassed or discriminated against, then she is the only one who can put an end to it. Insubordination from Soldiers is fixable, by taking the time to counsel first and recommending administrative action if the problem continues. If she is receiving this treatment from her superiors, then there are several agencies on Fort Drum that can assist her. Sexual harassment is not tolerable, and she can either call the inspector general or submit a complaint through her unit's equal opportunity office.

But before she ripples the waters, she has to look at herself to see if she is truly presenting herself as an NCO. Is she living the Army Values? She cannot seriously expect the people who work with her to accept her as a leader if she doesn't conduct herself as such.

SFC Michael A. Chesser
via e-mail

IN her July letter SGT Carla Marghella stated that she felt that her "position as a female is being abused."

Exactly what MOS is "female?" Could it be that she is a Soldier? She stated that she had to walk around with her head down because of the stares from the infantrymen. I can state that in the 20 years I have been an infantryman, if a female Soldier was in our area, especially in combat or at JRTC, and she was doing her job, we were just way too busy to stare her down.

Marghella also stated that she was informed that she should use her rank to tell the Soldiers when their behavior constituted harassment. This sergeant should learn that rank is worn, but respect has to be earned.

SSG Roger C. Ayscue
via e-mail

SGT Carla Marghella said that when she was attached to an infantry unit at JRTC and had to deal with Soldiers' stares, there was nothing she could do.

I do not care how many Soldiers were staring at her, it is her responsibility to take corrective action and inform those men that they were violating the Army's regulations against sexual harassment.

If you are a noncommissioned officer, regardless of which sex you are, it is your job to correct and train Soldiers. If SGT Marghella tried to correct those Soldiers and they continued to stare, then it was her duty to inform their chain of command. If that doesn't work, then you go to the next higher level. You keep doing that until the problem is solved.

All of this is taught in prevention of sexual harassment training that is mandatory for all Soldiers to attend, even those in combat units who do not work with females very often.

SGT Marghella said that there was nothing she could do. When an NCO says that there is nothing he or she can do, that is a sign of a poor NCO, or someone who shouldn't be an NCO in the first place. NCOs don't complain about problems, they solve them. That's what we are paid to do.

SGT Michael A. Porter Jr.
via e-mail

AS a female MP at Fort Benning, Ga., "Home of the Infantry," I find that I must disagree with SGT Marghella. I don't clearly see how the roles of females are being abused.

Granted, females are stared at, some even gossiped about. The military has been dominated by males throughout our country's history. Females are now being afforded the opportunity to

defend their country (in some cases) right beside their male counterparts. This change is so drastic that most males are shocked.

This is my advice to all females who feel as though they are being ostracized, stared at or outcast: We have earned the right to be here, by fighting and sometimes dying for this nation. This is our country too and we have the right to defend it.

If you truly feel you belong in the greatest army in the world, hold your head high. Be great at your job and the stares will stop and the respect will come.

SGT Heather Awner
via e-mail

Stupid Fort Names

IN the June issue someone wrote about "Fort Bundy, Puerto Rico," and I just want you to know that the U.S. does not possess any base called Bundy. Inserting dumb nicknames to try to be funny is very anti-professional and yet another slam at Puerto Rico.

Maricely Burgos-Diaz
via e-mail

WHILE we here at Soldiers do occasionally say funny things, we certainly would never impugn any region of this great nation. And, just for future reference, Fort Charles W. Bundy formed part of the World War II defenses of Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, near Ceiba, Puerto Rico. And yes, we accept your apology.

Soldiers values your opinion

To comment, keep your remarks to under 150 words, include your name, rank and address and send them to:

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A NEW Badge of Courage

Story by Beth Reece

UNDER the premise that every Soldier is first an infantryman, one might expect combat to be a fact of Army life.

But as dangerous as duty in Iraq and Afghanistan currently is, not every Soldier encounters enemy fire. To recognize the many who do, the Army has introduced the new Combat Action Badge. Eligibility for the award is retroactive to Sept. 18, 2001, Army officials said.

The badge honors such Soldiers as artillerymen, military police, truck drivers and other combat arms, combat-service and combat-service-support specialists who don't serve in the infantry or special forces, but who face enemy action.

"We created this badge in response to field commanders who wanted to do the right thing to recognize Soldiers fighting the global war on terror," said LTC Bill Johnson of the Army's Military Awards Branch.

The badge is intended for Soldiers who come under fire in combat zones. It will not be awarded to entire units. Recipients must have demonstrated honorable action while engaging or being engaged by the enemy.

"By giving the approval authority for the badge to major-general commanders and above, the Army is ensuring that the award is given to deserving Soldiers on a timely basis,"

Johnson said.

The CAB may be awarded to Soldiers, in any military occupational specialty, who performed assigned duties in an area where hostile-fire or imminent-danger pay was authorized.

Eligibility for the Combat Infantry Badge or Combat Medical Badge for a specific action disqualifies Soldiers for the CAB. The CIB was approved in 1943 to recognize infantry and special-forces Soldiers engaged in active ground combat. And in 1945 the CMB was approved for medical personnel engaged in ground combat while assigned to or under operational control of a combat-arms unit.

Only one CAB may be awarded in a single qualifying period. If eligibility criteria are met, Soldiers may be awarded the CIB, CMB and CAB in the same qualifying period, but for different actions.

Soldiers serving in combat zones will wear their unit patch on the right-shoulder sleeve regardless of whether they earn the CAB.

"The CAB and the combat patch denote entirely different things. The combat patch signifies that a Soldier was in the theater of operations, and the Combat Action Badge indicates a Soldier performed honorably in combat action," Johnson said.

First Soldiers Receive CAB

IN a June 29 ceremony at the Pentagon, Army Chief of Staff GEN Peter J. Schoomaker awarded the first of the Army's new Combat Action Badge to five Soldiers who engaged in combat with the enemy.

The five are:

- SGT Michael Buyas, Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 25th Inf. Division;
- SGT Manuel J. Montano, 21st Military Police Co.;
- SGT Sean Steans, 377th Transportation Co., 3rd Corps Support Command;
- Army Reserve SGT April Pashley, 404th Civil Affairs Bn.; and
- Army National Guard SGT Timothy Gustafson, 1st Bn., 278th Regimental Combat Team.

The CAB is worth 15 promotion points for enlisted Soldiers. It was designed by the Institute of Heraldry and depicts a bayonet and grenade.

"Warfare is still a human endeavor," said GEN Peter J. Schoomaker, Army chief of staff. "Our intent is to recognize Soldiers who demonstrate and live the warrior ethos."

This marks the first time women have been eligible for a



▲ Army Chief of Staff GEN Peter J. Schoomaker pins the CAB on SGT Sean Steans of the 377th Transportation Company. Steans was one of the first five Soldiers to receive the award, all of which were given during a June 29 ceremony at the Pentagon.

combat decoration other than the CMB, because women have traditionally not served in infantry and special forces.

Award Requests

The approval authorities mentioned above are responsible for processing all CAB requests for Soldiers currently assigned or attached to their commands, regardless whether the Soldier was assigned to that command at the time of the qualifying action.

The U.S. Army Human Resources Command will process retroactive requests for veterans, members of the Individual Ready Reserve, and members of other services and foreign militaries. Requests will be forwarded to Commanding General, USAHRC, ATTN: AHRC-PDO-PA, Alexandria, VA 22332-0471.

Requests should include the following supporting documentation:

- assignment, attachment or operational control orders;
- a copy of the Soldier's Officer Records Brief, Enlisted Records Brief or DA Form 2-1, "Personnel Qualification Record;"
- chain of command endorsement;
- narrative description of the qualifying incident;
- a certified copy of the Soldier's DD Form 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," if applicable;
- and such supporting documentation as official unit reports, casualty reports, line-of-duty investigations, two or

more eyewitness statements from Soldiers who participated in the same ground combat action, or orders for a previously awarded Purple Heart, if applicable.

Attacks by mortars, rockets, rocket-propelled grenades, improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers are qualifying factors. For such incidents, narratives must include the proximity of the Soldier to the impacted area and whether the Soldier could have reasonably been injured by the blast, detonation or explosion.

Soldiers will wear the badge above the left breast pocket of their dress uniforms, according to Army Regulation 670-1, "Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia." The CIB and CAB may not be worn at the same time. The CMB may be worn with either the CIB or CAB.

The CAB may be awarded to members of other services, as well as to foreign soldiers assigned to U.S. Army units.

Changes for Special Forces Medics

Along with the CAB comes a change in the CIB criteria for special-forces medics. Previously ineligible for the CIB, special-forces medics assigned or attached to special-forces units and who engage in active ground combat may now receive the CIB. Qualifying special-forces medics who were awarded a CMB from Sept. 18, 2001, to June 3, 2005, may swap the badge for a CIB.

For information on processing procedures, call the Military Awards Branch at (703) 325-8700/6699. 📞

For more information, go to <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/tagd/awards/index.htm> or www.army.mil/symbols/combatbadges.

Training Today's Soldiers at NTC

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

Story and Photos by Beth Reece



Soldiers move forward to search a building during training at the National Training Center. Long known for large-scale tank vs. tank battles, NTC now provides extensive training in urban operations.

SOLDIERS head into Iraq open-eyed. Suicide bombings, skirmishes, riots, cultural clashes — reacting to such things is nearly second nature after two weeks of wargaming at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

But training at NTC is not just a game in which Soldiers play war before facing the real thing. An unforgiving “enemy” ambushes Soldiers with enough firepower and cultural challenges to make them confident of their ability to respond.

“The art of training is about taking it to the toughest level, so we push Soldiers to the limit,” said BG Robert W. Cone, NTC’s commander.

Units throughout the Army work to collect resources to make NTC’s training as realistic as possible. The installation’s vast landscape, scorching

heat, real Iraqis as role players, trainers with combat experience, and access to the most recent lessons learned — with the ability to appropriately and quickly tweak training — all help improve training for visiting units. These things and more lead to NTC’s reputation as one of the world’s premier military training centers, Cone said.

“Our audience tells us that a day here is like a week or two in Iraq. Soldiers come here to be trained at a high rate, with lots of stress,” he said. “This wouldn’t be the National Training Center if it wasn’t hard.”

Smarter, Sharper Soldiers

NTC contains a dozen “Iraqi towns,” all with underground passages and buildings that resemble mosques,

shops and eateries. Structures are multi-dimensional, so Soldiers get used to looking in every direction for enemies.

The towns are spread across 1,000 square miles of desert, and platoons are stretched far apart to prime them for the command and logistics issues they’ll encounter in Iraq.

With the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment — NTC’s resident unit — now in Iraq, the Nevada Army National Guard’s 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry, is acting as NTC’s opposing force.

OPFOR Soldiers pinpoint and





▲ Team training fosters trust among Soldiers as they discover how their buddies react in the heat of conflict.

exploit visiting units' weaknesses as they rehearse nearly 50 round-the-clock scenarios in two weeks. The OPFOR will target a Soldier who's been left behind a corner, for example. Or if Soldiers drive their vehicles too close to the buildings, the OPFOR will attack with simulated improvised explosive devices.

SGT Timothy Wilson portrays the owner of a hot dog stand who lures Soldiers in for a bite to eat, then blows himself up when enough Soldiers are nearby.

"It's amazing to see how far Soldiers can come in two weeks, from

doing things that would get them killed to thinking for themselves. They become smarter and sharper," Wilson said.

Trainers guide Soldiers through group discussions during after-action reviews. Instead of telling them what they did wrong, they ask the Soldiers what they think happened, why they think it happened and what could have been done differently.

"The key is to get these guys to realize what they did wrong on their own, to say, 'I could have done that better' instead of having us point it out to them," said MSG Kevin Griffin, an

▶ Soldiers practice communicating with village mayors, police chiefs and religious leaders during simulated village patrols. When using interpreters, Soldiers are trained to look at the person they're speaking to.



► Using real Iraqis to portray townspeople and police gives Soldiers a better understanding of the country's language, culture and values.

assistant company trainer.

Scenarios change as frequently as events in the real war, because facilitators tap into a variety of information sources to find updated, reliable tactics that Soldiers should learn before entering Iraq.

Whether information comes from the Center for Army Lessons Learned or divisions currently serving in Iraq, trainers know the value of NTC is linked to the timeliness of the skills it imparts. Training remains so current that no two rotations have been alike since his arrival, said COL Steve Bailey, NTC's director of training.

Trust

The days are full for Soldiers and units training at NTC. Morning may require them to fight off "insurgents," while the afternoon may have them doling out water or medical supplies



By knowing and respecting the Iraqi culture, Soldiers can encourage townspeople to share information on insurgents' whereabouts and activities.

to locals.

When Soldiers enter a town to foster security and stability, their postures and behaviors shape how the locals respond. While aggression and force can provoke distrust, every action must project the image of strength and determination.

"If Soldiers look soft or easy, someone in the crowd will take advantage of it," said Bailey.

Some 250 Iraqi-Americans help Soldiers training at NTC to understand and appreciate Iraqi culture.

"These folks have the look, they speak the language and they know the

mannerisms of Iraq's people. You can instantly see the change in a Soldier's face when there's a real Iraqi standing in front of him yelling in Arabic," said Joel Hokkanen of the Titan Corporation, which hires ethnic participants after performing extensive background checks on them.

By knowing and respecting the Iraqi culture, Soldiers can encourage townspeople to share information on insurgents' activities, as well as the location of weapon caches.

"If they communicate with the locals — if they go into villages with water and medical aid — all of a sudden information starts to flow. But if a Soldier pulls into a town and says he's not dealing with local officials and starts shoving people around, things will get bad real quick," Cone said.

Born and raised in Iraq, "Sam" now portrays a town mayor in one of NTC's "villages." His memories of living under Saddam's regime still fresh, Sam asked that his real name be withheld to protect the family he left behind when coming to America.

"I have to do something, because I don't want Soldiers to sacrifice their lives in Iraq for nothing. The people there need our help," he said.

When Soldiers undergo negotiations training, Sam urges them to provide tangible aid.

"When you enter a town and replace Soldiers who've been there before, don't say, 'We're new here' and start from the beginning. Ask what happened before you got there and then continue," he tells Soldiers. "This is very important because the

▼ Simulated riots give Soldiers the chance to practice both patience and crowd-control techniques as they attempt to defuse a tense situation without resorting to violence.





- ▲ Soldiers drag an “injured” comrade to safety. The need to evacuate “casualties” adds another element of difficulty to the training.

Iraqis need to see progress to believe you are helping them.”

Interpreters and instructors from the Defense Language Institute provide negotiations training to company-level commanders and above. But all Soldiers get a shot at negotiating with mayors, police chiefs and religious leaders during village patrols.

“The lowest-ranking Soldier may have to take charge,” said trainer SFC Bruce Barnes. “Everyone needs to know how to interface with the Iraqis without offending them.”

But trust, Soldiers discover, has limits.

- Though Soldiers don’t practice running detention facilities during NTC training, they do learn to properly document individuals who are taken into custody.





▲ Conditions in California's central desert mirror those found in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and help prepare Soldiers for the conditions they'll encounter.

▼ Role players introduce Soldiers to the sounds of daily life in Iraq, as well as providing a realistic introduction to the complexities of dealing with different ethnic, religious and political groups in the Middle East.

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▲ Instead of telling Soldiers what they did wrong, NTC's trainers guide them through group discussions so they learn to judge their own progress and determine how they need to improve.

Change

Seeing NTC transform to resemble a regional portion of Iraq has hardened Hokkanen's belief that the Army is doing right by the steps it takes to prepare Soldiers for war.

"This was the premier place to have tank battles back when I was a young troop. To return and see it's still the premier place for training makes me feel a lot better about what we're doing before sending these Soldiers over to Iraq," he said.

Other than the boost in urban-operations training, the focus on cultural awareness may be NTC's biggest change.

"The importance of culture has forever changed the face of training here," said Cone. "Whoever our next enemy is, we need to have people from that cultural background here in sufficient numbers. You can teach cultural classes until you're blue in the face, but the kind of interaction Soldiers get here with Iraqis makes their transition into country so much easier." 📌

Training Today's Soldiers at

JRTC

JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER

Story and photos by SFC Antony Joseph



WITH the sound of gunfire and explosions in the distance mingling with the call to prayer from a nearby “mosque,” the sight of people in gallabiyahs and burkahs mingling with Soldiers in full battle rattle, and the smell of goat meat being grilled on a spit mingling with the smell of cordite and dust, you could be forgiven for thinking that you are in a village in Iraq.

But this is not Iraq, this is not even a foreign country. This is the daily scene in the backwoods of the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La.

“Here at JRTC attention to detail has always been the cornerstone of training,” said CSM Thomas R. Woodhams of JRTC’s operations group. He said that even before the global war on terrorism started, when the emphasis was more on conventional warfare than on safety and security operations, the scenarios were always carefully created. The villages and towns have always had the feel of the countries American forces were fighting in.

“Since about December 2002 more

SFC Antony Joseph, a former Soldiers staffer, is a public affairs NCOIC at Fort Campbell, Ky.

of JRTC’s focus has been on Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom missions, with tasks that include combat patrol, meetings with village dignitaries to discuss security concerns, opening clinics and schools, convoy security, cordons and searches, and raids,” Woodhams said. JRTC now has 18 towns and villages with about 11,000 buildings and urban sprawl created to look like parts of Iraq and Afghanistan, he added.

All the villages have role players performing such parts as mayors, police chiefs, newspaper and television reporters, café owners and even goat herders. One of the role players, Iraqi Hassan Kareem, said he heard of this job from a friend and jumped at the thought of playing a part in helping both the country of his birth and his country of residence.

“I feel that by me being here I can help the American Soldiers better understand the Iraqi people and culture,” Kareem said. “If misunderstanding of each other is minimized, it will help save the lives of the Soldiers and the Iraqi people.”

Woodhams said that there are about 1,200 role players. They work shifts, so that the training can continue

uninterrupted day and night.

“A lot of work goes into making the villages and situations seem as real as possible,” he said.

English is not spoken by the role players, unless required. The villages are even situated by religious divides to replicate the Sunni Triangle and Kurdish settlements in Iraq. Hollywood-created pyrotechnics simulate real battlefield environments, with wire-controlled rocket-propelled grenades and convincing improvised explosive devices as part of the role players’ arsenal.

Role players who use ingenious ways to make the training more challenging further enhance the reality.

“In one scenario a Vietnam-veteran amputee uses his disability to simulate his legs being blown off, requiring the Soldiers to react to the situation,” Woodhams said.

1SG Carl Ashmead of Headquarters and HQs. Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, from Fort Drum, N.Y., is an OEF veteran and has a few JRTC rotations under his belt. He was impressed with the changes to training based on



Soldiers and people portraying Iraqi civilians mingle at the entrance to a simulated Iraqi village at Fort Polk, La.



▲ Soldiers fire on and “destroy” a simulated insurgent target along a road at JRTC’s live-fire range.

lessons learned in-theater.

“Before, we had a templated threat, maneuvering in a conventional battlefield,” he said. “Now we are in a communications war, to win over the people, as much as actual combat operations.”

At JRTC the use of Arabic-speaking role players helps Soldiers under-

stand the complexity of communicating in environments such as Iraq. The Soldiers learn basic Arabic words that can replace gestures which may have been misunderstood. For instance, the use of the left hand to signal “stop” is considered disrespectful in the Middle East, and can be replaced with words. The varied scenarios in the different villages also give Soldiers a sense of what can occur in-theater, thus making them better prepared to react to situations, Ashmead said.

All the scenarios and teaching points are managed by a group of observer-controllers who evaluate down to the squad level.

“The OCs don’t practice a fall-on-your-face and be shamed technique. Instead, they coach, teach and mentor throughout the process, serve as mission command and control during the planning and execution, are responsible for the safety issues and hold after-action reviews at the completion of each scenario-based or random-occurrence exercise,” Woodhams said.

The OCs also conduct an AAR each evening with the commanding general of the rotational force. OCs are trained on lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan by recon teams who go to theater, and by all-source readings and joint lessons-learned conferences, Woodhams said.

No training scenario would be complete without the opposing force. At JRTC the OPFOR is made up of Soldiers from the 509th Infantry Regiment. The OPFOR is designed along the same lines as that of the insurgency in Iraq. Soldiers play the roles of former Iraqi regime military



◀ Role players acting as a town mayor and other dignitaries discuss their security concerns with members of an Army unit.

At JRTC the use of Arabic-speaking role players helps Soldiers understand the complexities of communicating in Iraq.

officers, Saddam loyalists, and such foreign terrorists as al Qaeda and the Mujahadeen.

SGT Erech Zych of Company D, 1st Bn., 509th Inf., is in charge of a five-man insurgent cell.

“Our mission before the current war on terrorism was geared toward combat operations. We lived in the woods and fought the rotational forces on a conventional battlefield. Now we live in the towns, adopt a civilian way of life, mix with the troops, win their trust, learn their weaknesses and then attack,” Zych said.

As with the insurgents in Iraq, the OPFOR troops don’t follow any guidelines or rules; they base their attacks on what the rotational forces allow.

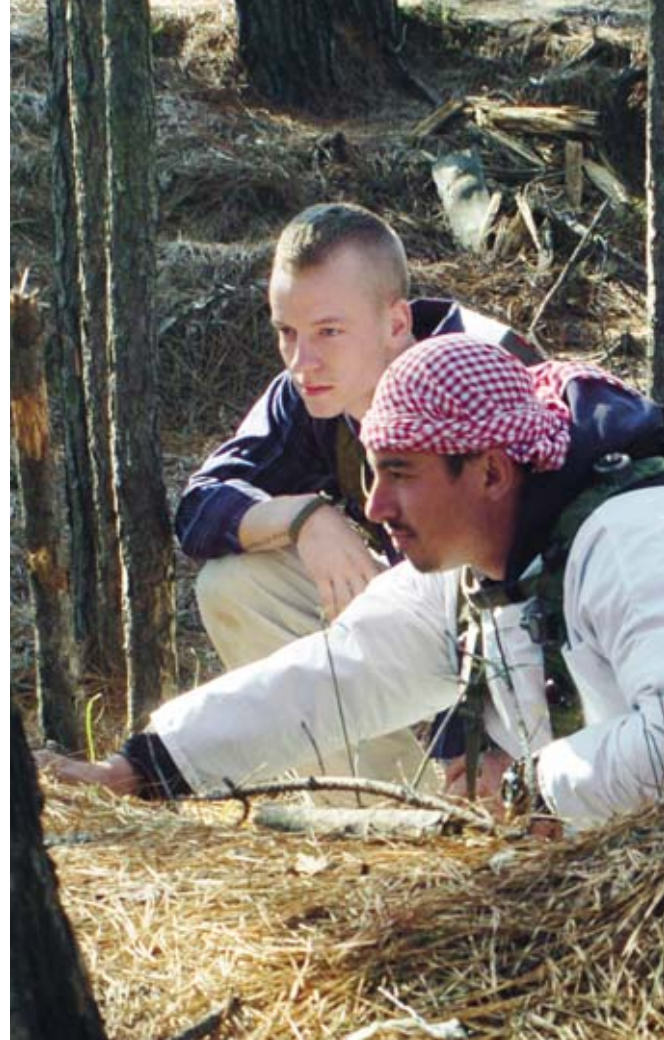
“Once we planned a fake wedding and invited the rotational forces, and while they were enjoying the festivities we ‘killed’ their commander,” Zych said.

This kind of training ensures Soldiers stay alert at all times and

remain aware that the least threatening of situations might be the most dangerous, he said.

The training culminates in a live-fire exercise. The units are put through a convoy or foot-patrol scenario, during which all assets available to a commander are used. Special forces units and Air Force, Marine and Army helicopters take part in many of the scenarios. IEDs, RPGs, suicide bombers, cardboard-cutout insurgents and civilians on the battlefield are carefully planted in scenes that would make even the best Hollywood director envious.

“The tempo is very quick and very similar to what we faced in Afghanistan,” said SGT Matthew Scott Primrose, of HHC, 2nd Bn., 22nd Inf. “You



▲ Portraying insurgents, SGT Erech Zych and SPC Jack Tongem prepare to detonate a simulated roadside bomb targeting a convoy moving through Fort Polk’s maneuver “box.”

have to think and react fast before you engage, because not all the targets that pop up are hostile.”

The training at JRTC is constantly refined to reflect current situations in theater, and thus allows for up-to-date training for the troops ready to deploy, Woodhams said.

The beeping sound of Soldiers’ Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement Systems going off, simulating kills, the smell of moth balls indicating a recent explosion, the sight of Soldiers in bandages with fake blood oozing from wounds aren’t just scenes from a long hectic day at JRTC. They’re lessons learned that might one day make the difference between life and death in a hostile land. 🇺🇸

◀ A vehicle and its occupants are searched at a checkpoint manned by Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry.



Training Today's Soldiers at

CMTC

COMBAT MANEUVER TRAINING CENTER

Story and Photos by Steve Harding



THE sign on the outskirts of the village reads “Fallujah,” and the Soldiers approaching the cluster of buildings are appropriately wary. They scan the area, alert for trouble, as they tread carefully through ... eight inches of fresh snow.

Though the scenario says “Iraq,” the architecture, terrain and bone-chilling temperatures say “Bavaria.” But for the Soldiers polishing their skills at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, before deploying to Southwest Asia, the European surroundings aren’t a distraction.

“We’re using exactly the same tactics, techniques and procedures here that we’ll use in Iraq,” said a young squad leader as he and his Soldiers prepared to search a house. “Hot or cold, sand or snow, it makes no difference. We’re here to sharpen up before we go downrange, and CMTC has everything we need to do that.”

A Tradition of Training

Located about 45 miles southeast of Nürnberg, Hohenfels is home to about 5,000 permanently assigned Soldiers, Department of the Army and local national

civilians, and family members. Established by the German army in 1938, it has been a primary training area for Europe-based Soldiers since the early 1950s.

Though in earlier days the installation focused on training Soldiers to face the Soviet threat, things have changed, said LTC Steve Hebert, CMTC’s deputy commander.

“We’re training Soldiers to deal with today’s operational environment,” Hebert said. “Let’s face it, the Soviet army is gone, and today’s bad guys have different objectives, weapons and tactics. Because of the off-the-shelf technologies that are



▲ The sign says Fallujah, but the weather says Germany. Despite the snow and European architecture, CMTC’s various MOUT sites offer exactly the kind of tactical training Soldiers need before going “downrange.”

◀ A Bradley moves forward to engage “insurgents” during a training rotation. CMTC’s open spaces allow mechanized units to train against both dismounted and mounted threats.

available today, our current and potential enemies can get their hands on a range of weapons and equipment that just weren't available a decade ago.

"So when we design our training rotations here at CMTC, we build them around the strategies, operational capabilities and tactics that our enemies are using today," he said.

In recent years CMTC has trained units bound for such hotspots as Bosnia and Kosovo, as well as Iraq and Afghanistan. That means that the installation's training audience has also changed.

"It used to be that we just catered to the 1st Armored Division, 1st Infantry Div. and the Southern European Task Force," Hebert said. "But now we support all U.S. forces in Europe — such as aviation, engineer and military police units at the corps and theater level — as well as all continental U.S.-based units and our multinational and coalition partners."

That might seem like a lot of activity to pack into a training area that's just 10 kilometers wide by 20 kilometers long,

▼ **Soldiers carefully scan the windows of surrounding buildings as other members of their unit search for "insurgents" in the largest of CMTC's MOUT sites.**

One of the ways CMTC enhances the level and quality of the training it offers is by exploiting live, virtual and constructive training capabilities.

but Hebert said the secret is making the best use of the available space, as well as using outlying training areas and maneuver-coordination areas.

"We pack a lot into 40,000 acres — a main cantonment area, five MOUT sites, two geographically separated forward operating bases, four extensive cave complexes and a C-130-capable airstrip," he said. "We also expand CMTC's capabilities by locating forces in outlying areas, and then using our electronic 'reach-back' capability to integrate them into the training going on here."

Moreover, CMTC is leading the Army in planning and executing "expeditionary" training, which involves deploying personnel and equipment to places such as Poland, Bulgaria and Romania to train both U.S. and foreign personnel.

Mission Focused

Like the Grafenwöhr training area some 50 miles to the north, CMTC is a 7th Army Training Command asset. And its mission, Hebert said, is a simple one.

"We exist to provide tough, realistic, battle-focused training across the spectrum of conflict for Army, joint and multinational units," he said. "So our focus is on developing adaptive leaders — that means commanders and their battle staffs — and on the integration of joint forces with interagency and multinational players."

One of the ways CMTC enhances the level and quality of the training it offers is by exploiting distributive live, virtual and constructive training capabilities, Hebert said.

"We have long concentrated on live training, but have also added the capability to bring in the entire world of simulation," he said. "We're getting to the point where we can put crews into simulators and have them be part of the same scenario as Soldiers who are training out in the field."

CMTC builds its success on five "pillars," Hebert said.

"The first, of course, is the units that come here for training. The second is



► Soldiers prepare to right a Bradley that slid off the road. While rare, such accidents accurately reflect the realities of operations “downrange” and reinforce the need for safety in the field.

what is commonly referred to as our ‘Star Wars’ capability — our instrumentation, training aids and devices, simulations and simulators. Third is our operations group, which incorporates our observer-control-ers, our leader-training center and our support agencies. Fourth is our opposing-force unit. And the final pillar is our facilities,” he said.

A key motivator for everyone at CMTC is the fact that rotational units are bound for real-world, operational deployments, said LTC Mike Santos, CMTC’s plans chief.

“We know that the Soldiers in these units are going in harm’s way once they leave here, and we do everything we can to make sure they get the training they need to go to war,” Santos said.

He and his staff plan the rotations for all the units that train at CMTC. His staff includes maneuver, field artillery, aviation and engineer planners.

“We tailor the rotation to the unit,” Santos said. “So that the scenarios match the circumstances the unit will find in Iraq or Albania or wherever it’s going.”

“The situations our Soldiers face in Iraq and Afghanistan are extremely complex,” he said. “There are more friendlies to deal with, as well as a lot more bad guys. So we develop story lines that reflect that reality.”

These story lines include stability and security operations, humanitarian-assistance events, dealing with such evolving institutions as local governments or tribal leaders, and destabilizing events like enemy attacks and public demonstrations, Santos said. Many of the story lines intersect, and by following a scripted series of events the trainers ensure that Soldiers are getting the training they need.

OPFOR and COBs

Once the rotational units get into the “box” they move through an environment that not only replicates the one they’ll experience “downrange,” it is also peopled by a robust opposing force and role-players portraying the citizens, insurgents,



leaders and media representatives the Soldiers will encounter.

CMTC’s OPFOR is provided by the Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry, whose commander said his men are well equipped to help rotational units get the training they need.

“We have just about everything a standard infantry battalion has, though we also have a tank company, which most battalions do not have,” said LTC Randy Copeland. “We can replicate virtually any threat, including an armored force, terrorists or insurgents.

“As the OPFOR we focus on two things,” Copeland said. “First, we look at the rotational unit’s training objectives,

and then we gear our activities toward allowing them to accomplish those training goals. We don’t want to be so devious, so destructive and so disruptive that the ‘Blue Force’ can’t get anything done, because that defeats the training goal.

“Second, we look at our own capabilities and decide how far we should go in terms of the threat we pose to the Blue Force units,” he said. “We want to make it difficult for them, and we want to make them deal with our tactics and techniques, so that they really learn something while they’re here. Ultimately, our job as OPFOR is to ensure that the Blue Force Soldiers are better when they leave than they were when they got here.”

“The system tracks the live players and all simulated firing and hit events, and determines the number and type of ‘kills.’”

Adding to the realism are civilians on the battlefield, or COBs.

“We have 17 permanent government civilians and 67 local nationals, and we can also call on up to 600 augmentees,” said Timothy L. Good, chief of CMTC’s COB program. “We can dress them in anything from police and military uniforms to various styles of Arab robes, and we can arm them with replica weapons ranging from AK-47s to RPGs and improvised explosive devices.”

The COBs tailor their battlefield activity to the training scenario developed by Santos’ planners, Good said. If, for example, the unit undergoing training is bound for a certain region in Iraq, the COBs replicate that area by putting up appropriate road signs.

“More importantly, our COBs are true role players,” Good said. “Many of them take on the names and roles of actual people downrange, and we have scripts that allow us to replicate actual situations and events. That allows the rotational units to get a real feel for where they’re going.”

O/Cs and TACS

Ensuring that the rotational units get the most out of their training time is also the top priority for CMTC’s observer/controllers.

“Our O/Cs ‘cover down’ at the complement level, meaning that each leader in the training unit down to platoon level will be covered by a person of equal rank and background experience,” Hebert said.

The O/Cs coach, teach and mentor the training units through a combination of on-site observation, real-time video shot by camera crews known as “Viper Teams,” and data gathered by CMTC’s Training Analysis Computer Support and Simulations Directorate.

“TACS, as we call it, is the training feedback center for U.S. Army, Europe,” said Arnold Geissler, the organization’s



▲ A Soldier keeps a wary eye on the resident of a building (*above*) — portrayed by a local German civilian — while other members of his squad clear the structure’s upper floors (*right*).



- An employee at CMTC's Training Analysis Computer Support and Simulations Directorate keeps track of a "battle" unfolding out in one of the training areas.

operations officer. "The CMTC Instrumentation System gives us near-real-time tracking, updates once a second, can update up to 800 live players, and can integrate more than 10,000 additional constructive and virtual players. The system tracks the live players and all simulated firing and hit events, and determines the numbers and types of 'kills.' We also record the unit tactical frequencies, and we can replay all events on demand.

"The ultimate purpose of gathering all the data is to compile after-action reviews that show the rotational units what they did right and what they did wrong," Geissler said. "The AAR lets them know whether they met their training objectives."

For the Soldiers

Helping units meet their training goals before they deploy is something everyone at CMTC takes very seriously, Hebert said.

"One of the major considerations for the combat training centers Armywide is the fact that units no longer come for training and then return to their home stations to implement an 18-month training plan," he said. "Units leave here and go directly to war. That's something all of us at CMTC keep foremost in our minds. So we're focused on mission readiness, not on preparing units to go home and train some more.

"We're all working for the Soldiers, and our bottom-line goal is to do all we can to ensure that they are as good as their jobs as they can possibly be," he said. 🇺🇸

- COBS — the people who portray civilians on the battlefield — can draw on a variety of simulated weapons (*middle photo*) and authentic uniforms and other clothing (*right*) to enhance the reality of their performances.







Kuwait

Soldiers from Company E, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry, practice live-fire squad-movement techniques at Camp New York, Kuwait.

— SPC Ben Brody



◀ Afghanistan

Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry, prepare to board a CH-47 Chinook before a mission during Operation Fury Blitz in Mangritae.

— SPC Harold Fields

▶ Afghanistan

Soldiers of the 29th Inf. Division begin digging a mortar emplacement during Operation Rubble.

— SSG Joseph P. Collins Jr.

▼ Afghanistan

Engineers from Alaska-based Co. C, 864th Engineer Bn., level a portion of the nearly completed 117-kilometer TK Road, stretching from Kandahar to Tarin Kowt.

— 1LT Laura Walker





▲ Australia

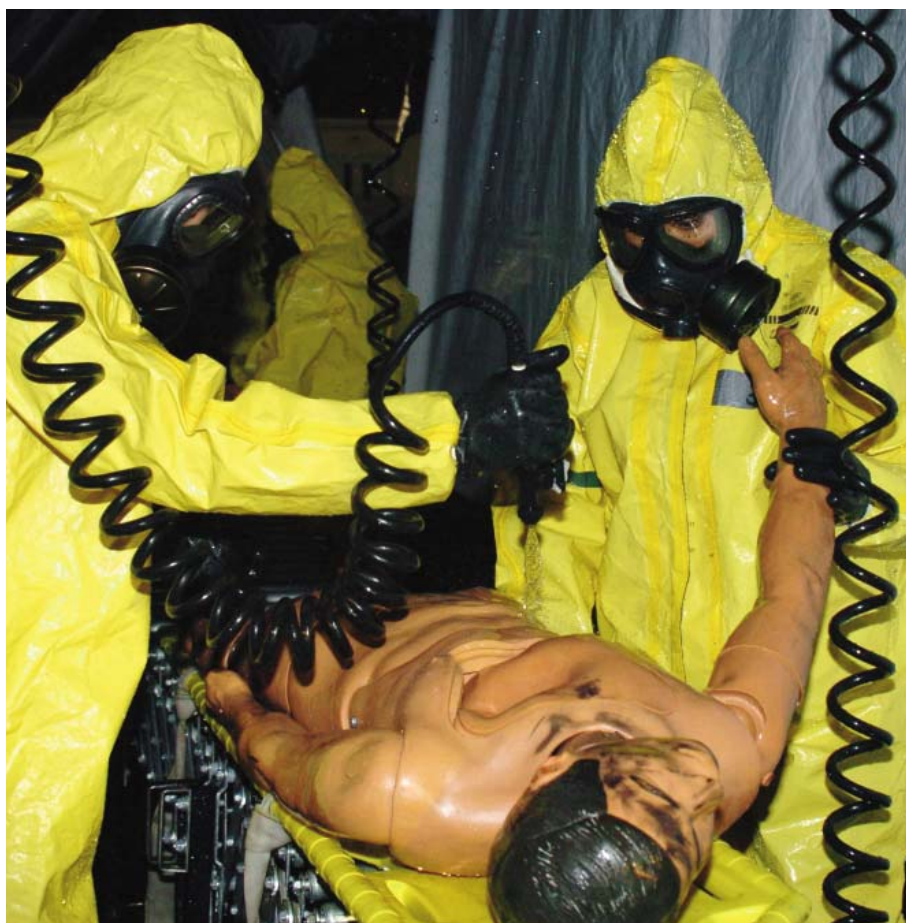
SPC Howard Royal of the 1st Bn., 501st Inf. Regt., mans a .50-caliber machine gun on his Humvee in Queensland during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2005.

— CPL Bernard Person

► Wisconsin

Elements of the Army Reserve's 357th, 366th and 401st Chemical companies conduct decontamination and treatment operations for simulated casualties at Fort McCoy. This was part of Operation Red Dragon, a joint civilian-military exercise to test coordinated responses to a simulated nuclear and chemical bomb attack.

— SSG Brian D. Lehnhardt



Read to Stay Close

Story by LTC Frederick Rice

The “Read To Your Kids” program offers deployed service members the opportunity to be videotaped while reading children’s books to their kids.



VEN though service members at Camp Eggers, in Kabul, Afghanistan, are separated from their families by thousands of miles, they can still read to their kids.

Thanks to the efforts of one noncommissioned officer assigned to the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan, more than 200 parents deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom have read to their kids over a recent four-month period.

The “Read To Your Kids” program was established in late November by Army Reserve MSG D. Keith Johnson from the OMC-A Public Affairs Office as a way to bring deployed Soldiers closer to their loved ones at home. In March, Johnson reached a new milestone when he completed his 200th taping.

The 200th reader was SGT Tania Steele, from OMC-A’s Staff Judge Advocate office. She read “The Fairy

and the Missing Wand” and “The Way Mothers Are” to her two daughters, who are seven and five.

“This is the first time I’ve been away from my kids, and I just want them to know I’m always with them,” said Steele.

Based on a similar project he organized during a previous deployment to Bosnia, Johnson’s “Read To Your Kids” program offers deployed service members the opportunity to be videotaped while reading children’s books to their kids.

When each half-hour taping session is completed, Johnson presents participants with their personal videotape and books, along with a padded

▲ Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Jamie Looney, an embedded trainer assigned to Task Force Phoenix in Afghanistan, reads a story to his children.

➤ MAJ Keith Rivers selects a book to read to his children from among the hundreds donated to the “Read To Your Kids” program.



LTC Frederick Rice is assigned to the Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan Public Affairs Office.

envelope, so they can mail the items to their families.

"I really like the idea that my daughters can see me reading to them. It's the closest thing to me being there," said Steele. "It just makes me feel like I still have a part in their lives."

While Johnson is very low-key about reaching the 200-tape milestone, Air Force Maj. Gen. John Brennan, chief of OMC-A, thinks otherwise. "To dedicate so much time to the benefit of others is truly great and is an inspiration to all of us," he said.

Johnson spends at least 10 hours running the program each Friday, his only day off from a busy workweek. He estimates that he has invested more than 125 hours of his time in the program since its inception. But he calls it a labor of love.

"The feedback I get from the parents who have sent tapes back to their kids has been incredible. It makes the whole program worth the effort," Johnson said.

Brennan thinks it's worth the effort as well. "The program has truly made a positive impact on both troop and family member morale," he said.

Even though 15 openings are available on the schedule every Friday, the program, which is also open to the members of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan at Camp Eggers, has become so popular that the slots are booked weeks in advance.

It is so popular, in fact, that it expanded from Camp Eggers to Camp Phoenix, where SSG Jerad Myers, from the Task Force Phoenix PAO, established a satellite program with Johnson's assistance.

TF Phoenix, a subordinate unit of OMC-A, is responsible for training the Afghan National Army.

During his reading period, Reserve LTC Joel Sloss made a special tape. His was for the students of Ocee Elementary School in Alpharetta, Ga., where he teaches fourth grade.

"I knew the children missed me, so I was looking for a way to let them know I was all right," Sloss said. "'Read To Your Kids' proved to be a wonderful way to do that.

"They absolutely loved it and



▲ In Afghanistan, SGT Tania Steele displays one of the children's books she will read, via videotape, to her daughters Shania, 7, and S'Bria, 5. Steele's video was the 200th completed for the OMC-A "Read To Your Kids" program.

were reassured that I was okay," said Sloss, who received a wealth of e-mail and letters from students after his tape was played for the school. "The children really enjoyed seeing their teacher, and many have asked if I would do it again sometime."

The program is supported entirely by contributions that have come via the anysoldier.com Web site and through other donors.

"Literally hundreds of books and blank videocassettes have been donated to make this program possible," Johnson said. "Without the help of the volunteers back home, this

program wouldn't have made it past the first week."

MAJ Mark Elfendahl, a CFC-A staff officer and recent participant, is excited about sending his tape and books home. His daughter will "really love reading along with her Dad," Elfendahl said. "What a great way for service members to stay in touch with their families."

And that's why Johnson started his program in the first place — to bring Soldiers and their families together, even when doing their duty means they have to be away from loved ones. 🇺🇸

"Literally hundreds of books and blank videocassettes have been donated to make this program possible," Johnson said.

CHILDREN at a tiny schoolhouse south of Baghdad got a big surprise recently, when a convoy of Soldiers rolled into the Iraqi capital bearing gifts from the citizens of America.

With the help of an organization called Operation Iraqi Children, Soldiers from various units in Iraq delivered a truckload of school supplies and toys to hundreds of Iraqi schoolchildren.

OIC, founded by actor Gary Sinise — who starred in “Forrest Gump” and “Apollo 13,” and Laura Hillenbrand, author of the book “Seabiscuit: An American Legend” — is an organization that helps Americans help children in Iraq, thereby supporting the Army’s overall efforts to improve the quality of life for Iraqis, said officials at the Multinational Corps, Iraq, Public Affairs Office.

On this particular supply mission, Soldiers delivered 25 cases of Beanie Babies, 245 book bags and backpacks, 13 cases of school supplies, and assorted jump ropes, Frisbees and soccer balls.

The delivery run was the third for MAJ Andy Johnson, a civil military operations officer for the 18th Mili-

tary Police Brigade from Mannheim, Germany.

Johnson said Soldiers have been able to develop much more personal relationships with Iraqis in various communities because of the generous donations from American schoolchildren, church groups and other organizations.

The presentation of the gifts is a real icebreaker, said Johnson. “We walk into a school and the children are unsure about how to relate to us. We arrive in Humvees, carrying our weapons, but as soon as the children see we’ve got school supplies, pencils

and paper, and sometimes candy, they really open up.”

Through OIC’s School Supply Kit Program, American schoolchildren, church groups and other organizations can conduct local drives to collect supplies and then assemble them for shipment according to OIC instruc-

► An Iraqi school girl gives the thumbs-up sign alongside her friend after they and many other children received new school supplies and backpacks in May from Soldiers stationed in and around Iskandariyah, Iraq.



Delivering More than Sc

SPC Jeremy Crisp is assigned to the Multinational Corps, Iraq, Public Affairs Office.



▲ LTC Roberto L. Garcia, the government team chief for the Army Reserve’s 353rd Civil Affairs Brigade, compares watches with an Iraqi child at a school in Iskandariyah. Garcia was part of a multi-unit effort to provide school supplies for Iraqi children.



▲ SSG Butch A. Drake, the education and civil-affairs NCOIC for Task Force 134 at Camp Victory, hands out Beanie Babies to a group of Iraqi school children in Iskandariyah.



▲ 1LT Micah D. Taylor of the Mannheim, Germany-based 18th Military Police Brigade, receives a kiss of thanks from a girl at the Iskandariyah school. Taylor was part of the humanitarian mission to provide the children with school supplies. Soldiers receive the supplies from an organization called Operation Iraqi Children, through which Americans donate book bags, school supplies, and toys.

hool Supplies

Story and Photos by SPC Jeremy Crisp

tions. Contributors then send the kits to the Veterans of Foreign Wars for transport to Iraq.

SSG Butch Drake, an education and civil-affairs NCO who learned about OIC via the Internet, has been one of the key organizers for the delivery of donations.

Drake played an integral part in getting the supplies for the recent operation. "I sent out some e-mails and contacted OIC's facilitator in Iraq. That set the wheels in motion," he said.

"Before OIC, we had little to give to the kids," Drake said. "We had only small amounts of supplies from Soldiers' families back home."

As the person in charge of getting

the shipments from OIC to Baghdad, Drake said receiving the supplies isn't what thrills him, it's being there when they're delivered.

"I've never seen such responses from Iraqi children," Drake said. "It's just amazing."

SFC Craig Coker, a Reservist from the 451st CA Bn. in Texas, said when he and other Soldiers in his unit deliver supplies, the local people can see that Americans aren't bad guys.

"The impact of the little things we've done here is tremendous," Coker said. "When we build relationships with the people, the mothers of these children gain confidence that we're not awful monsters."

He said it's the one-on-one interac-

tions that are paying dividends in lives saved.

"We're doing a lot of big things, structural things, such as building bridges and electrical plants," Coker added. "But it's the one-on-one relationships, such as the ones we build when we drop off supplies, that will eventually save lives."

He relayed a case in point. "We were heading down the road a week ago and two ladies came running up to us and stopped our convoy," Coker said. "They were yelling 'Ali Baba, Ali Baba, boom, boom,' which means 'bad guys,' 'explosion.' They led us to two improvised explosive devices. We were able to cordon off the area

(Continued on page 32)

Hope Thro

“No matter how many tanks, trucks and planes we have, success on a day-to-day basis here is based on the way we relate to people”

(Continued from page 31)

and dispose of the devices.

“We had done something that had affected these ladies’ lives — because in that area, we had been pumping in the supplies,” Coker said. “Sure enough, something affected them and they took a chance on helping us. That was a big chance they took.

“Everything in Iraq is really based on relationships,” Coker continued. “No matter how many tanks, trucks and planes we have, success on a day-to-day basis here is based on the way we relate to people. These relationships are not only for safety, but for the future of Iraq’s children.”

Once all the supplies were handed out at the schoolhouse, Coker assured the principal of the school that the Soldiers would be back in a week. Coker and the civil-affairs team obtained shelving and other items that the classrooms desperately need.

Before the Soldiers said goodbye, the ecstatic children offered their thanks and praise to America. Then they posed for a picture with a group of Soldiers, before running home proudly with their new school supplies. 🇺🇸



ough Learning

Story and Photos by MSG Lek Mateo

TEXAS Army National Guard Soldiers are involved in a project that they hope will help Iraqis prosper.

The Iraqi Ministry of Education has partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Iraqi army and Texas Guard Soldiers from the 36th Infantry Division to construct seven new schools in southern Iraq.

Richard Riley, a project engineer for the USACE's Gulf Region Southern District, said that the new schools are being built to replace dilapidated schoolhouses in several rural villages.

Most of the children in the areas where the new schools will be built have had to endure overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, Riley said. During the rainy season, dirt floors in some of the schools turned to mud, which caked on the children's bare feet.

Although USACE is involved with several major public works projects in Iraq as part of Iraqi reconstruction and relief efforts, Riley said that helping to build schools is one of the most fulfilling projects he's ever been involved with. "We're trying to make the lives of the Iraqi people, especially

(Continued on page 35)

MSG Lek Mateo works for the Texas Army National Guard's 56th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office.

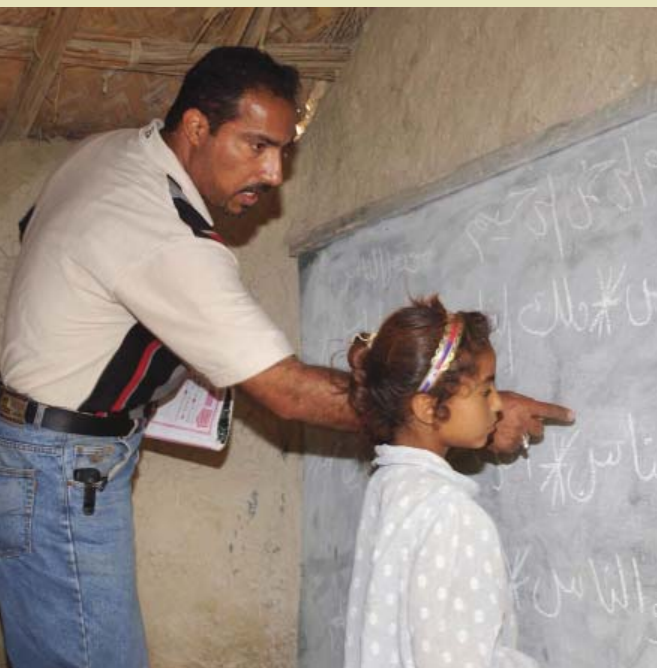
◀ Flag-waving Iraqi children gleefully spill out into the courtyard of their mud and straw schoolhouse for recess. The Iraqi Ministry of Education, with assistance from the U.S. Army Corps Engineers Gulf Region, Southern District, and Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard's 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, hopes to be able to replace the outdated mud and straw schoolhouse with more modern buildings.





◀ Iraqi army troops provide security for the ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of a new school.

▶ The new school is in the village of Al Sulayhat in southern Iraq. it was built by the Iraqi Ministry of Education with assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region, Southern District, and Soldiers of the Texas Army Guard's, 56th BCT.



▲ An Iraqi teacher and his student review a problem on a worn-out chalk board in a cramped mud and straw schoolhouse in the village of Al Zebin. The Iraqi Ministry of Education later opened the doors of a new modern school nearby to replace the outdated schoolhouse.



(Continued from page 33)

the children, a little better,” he said.

MAJ Brian Stevens, a civil-affairs officer with the 36th Div.’s 56th Brigade Combat Team, knew he had a daunting challenge ahead of him when he took over management of the school projects — that were in various stages of construction — from his counterpart in the New Hampshire National Guard’s 197th Field Artillery Bde.

Stevens said despite the trials of having to overcome language and cultural barriers, the partnership between the USACE and the Iraqi Ministry of Education is a positive one and the projects he will see completed will have a lasting impact.

“Any time you open up a school, you’re putting the needs of the children up front,” Stevens said.

During his 35 years as an educator, Muhammed Baji has taught many life lessons to his pupils, he said. But the one lesson that he has always tried to emphasize is that without a proper education, a person cannot grow and prosper.

“The future is for the children, not for us,” Baji said. “We want to steer them on the right path of life, with education.”

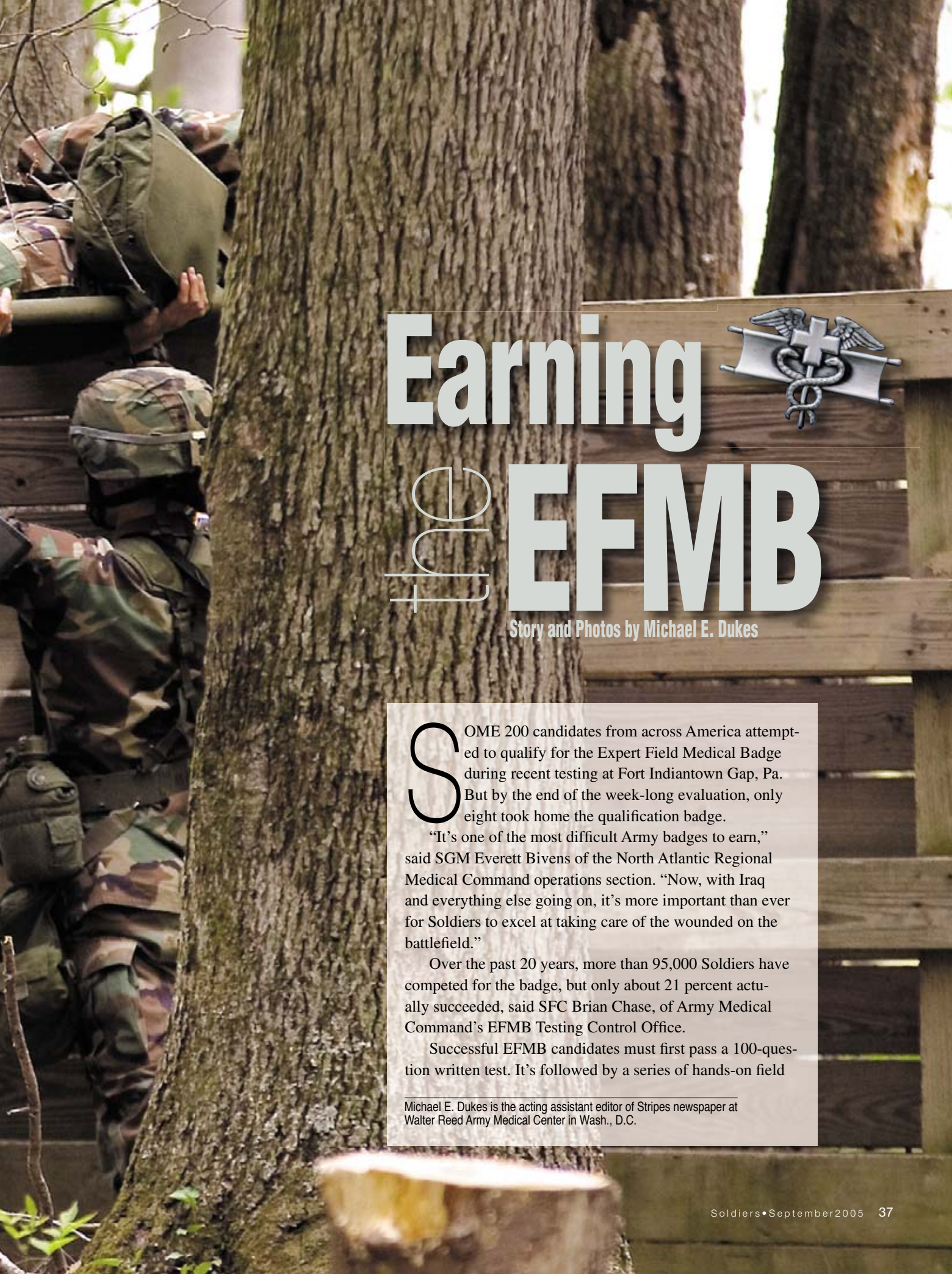
Adil Abdurrida, the father of three, is also a former English teacher. He said, “Iraqi parents know education is important in their children’s lives, and they want them to have the opportunity to learn the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic.

“Iraq needs doctors, scientists and engineers to help the people of Iraq,” Abdurrida said. “Learning the fundamentals will give the children a foundation on which to build.”

◀ Iraqi schoolgirls stand outside the Al Sulayhat school that will be replaced by the new Al Kenanah Intermediate School.



Expert Field Medical Badge candidates take their first steps on the obstacle course, carrying a simulated casualty on a litter.



Earning EFMB



Story and Photos by Michael E. Dukes

SOME 200 candidates from across America attempted to qualify for the Expert Field Medical Badge during recent testing at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa. But by the end of the week-long evaluation, only eight took home the qualification badge.

"It's one of the most difficult Army badges to earn," said SGM Everett Bivens of the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command operations section. "Now, with Iraq and everything else going on, it's more important than ever for Soldiers to excel at taking care of the wounded on the battlefield."

Over the past 20 years, more than 95,000 Soldiers have competed for the badge, but only about 21 percent actually succeeded, said SFC Brian Chase, of Army Medical Command's EFMB Testing Control Office.

Successful EFMB candidates must first pass a 100-question written test. It's followed by a series of hands-on field

Michael E. Dukes is the acting assistant editor of Stripes newspaper at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Wash., D.C.



EFMB candidates bear a simulated casualty over a small bridge on the litter obstacle course.

“It’s one of the most difficult Army badges to earn.”



exercises, which test how to properly evacuate the sick and wounded from the battlefield, and how to perform emergency medical treatment.

Candidates must also complete an obstacle course while carrying a litter, and a day and night land-navigation course. Finally, they face a grueling, 12-mile road march.

Only 86 of the original 200 candidates passed the written test during this year’s EFMB testing, officials said. While most of the candidates were from the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command, Soldiers from as far away as California competed.

Following the written tests, Soldiers had to demonstrate their proficiency in the field.

While evaluators hurried the Soldiers through their tasks, explosions shook the trees around them, simulated small-arms fire erupted from every direction, and plumes of colored smoke billowed into the air.

Screams for help echoed through the forest as simulated casualties lay waiting for the candidates to assist them. The “casualties” suffered from a variety of mock battlefield wounds, from open-chest wounds and spinal-cord injuries to shock and post-traumatic stress disorder.

During a special survival segment, EFMB hopefuls had to negotiate obstacles in a stress-inducing, lifelike scenario.

A helicopter went down somewhere on a hillside, and survivors on the ground needed to be “rescued.” However,

SPC Leon Evans explains to an evaluator the steps he is taking to prepare an IV for a simulated battle casualty.



“enemy” soldiers patrolled the area and were using small arms, grenades and chemical weapons against anyone who tried to rescue survivors of the crash.

The steep hills were rocky, and fallen leaves and branches covered the muddy ground, all adding to the Soldiers’ difficulty in negotiating the area. Halfway up the hill, candidates fell to the ground in a prone position as machine-gun fire caught them off guard. They returned fire as they scanned the hillside for the enemy.

When purple smoke appeared around them, an evaluator informed them that they had just encountered a chemical attack. In seconds, the Soldiers had their gas masks in place.

Then they proceeded outside the affected area, where they quickly decontaminated themselves.

After a series of additional tasks, they eventually located the wounded Soldiers from the helicopter crash. To get the casualties down the hill to an awaiting truck, evaluators asked them to first use a litter to move a fallen Soldier. Next, they were asked to drag “wounded” Soldiers.

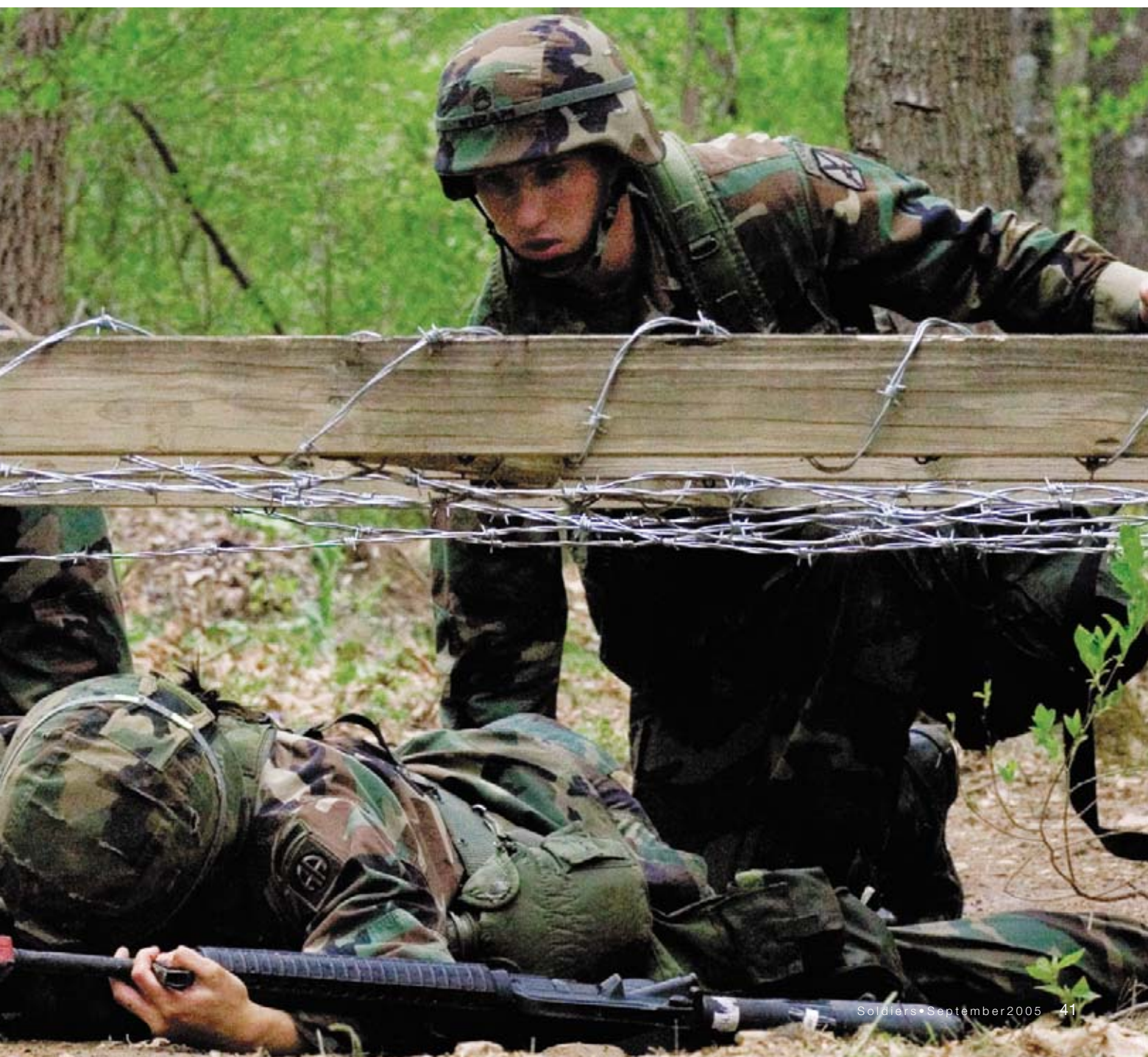
After they reached the awaiting truck, they were ordered to properly load the casualties into the bed of the truck.

During a litter obstacle course, a team of four candidates carried a Soldier on a litter over obstacles that included a low and a high wall, a low-crawl under barbed wire, a series

Candidates prepare to lift a casualty onto a litter after successfully negotiating the low-crawl obstacle during the litter obstacle course segment of testing.



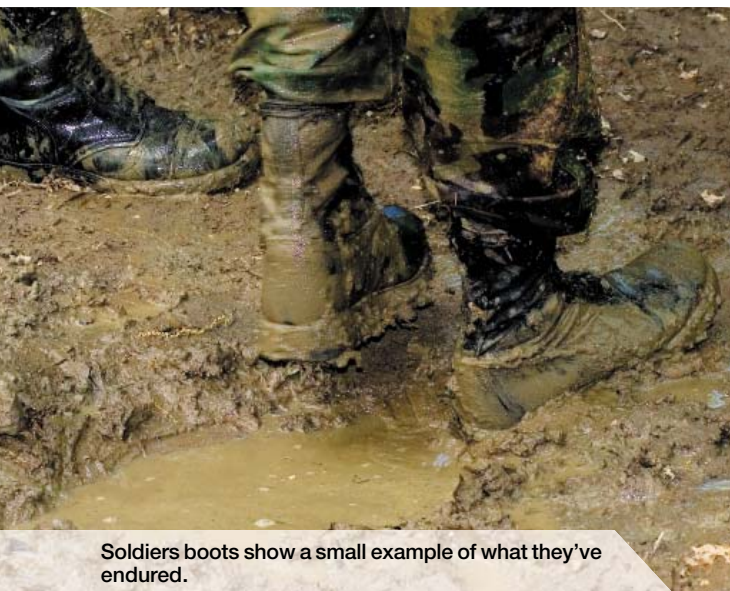
The “casualties” suffered from a variety of mock battlefield wounds, from open-chest wounds and spinal-cord injuries to shock and post-traumatic stress disorder.





Candidates muster the last of their energy to finish the final steps of the obstacle course.

As if the obstacle course wasn't difficult enough, there were "enemy ambushes" at various points along the way.




Soldiers boots show a small example of what they've endured.

of narrow bridges, rocky and muddy hills, and a trench with waist-deep water.

As if the obstacle course wasn't difficult enough, there were "enemy ambushes" at various points along the way. While rifle fire and simulated grenades went off from all around them, colored smoke obscured their view of the path ahead.

At the end of each day, worn and battered Soldiers wearily made their way back to their base camp for chow and the comfort of their cots and tents.

After the final day of the field tasks, with only the road march remaining, only a handful of candidates remained. Of the nine candidates who started the march that morning, only one dropped out.

"Unfortunately the Soldier couldn't make it past the 10-and-a-half-mile point," Bivens said. 

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When Do Volunteers Perform Their Duties?

Ambassadors and Installation POCs perform their duties year-round with heavier emphasis in the June–December months, when school visits are key to encouraging registration in the competition. CyberGuides perform their duties throughout the competition. This year's competition launches September 1, 2005 and ends February 21, 2006.

To register, please visit www.ecybermission.com and click on "Volunteer Information and Registration." If you have questions, contact volunteerprogram@ecybermission.com.

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MILITARY HONORS

THE privilege of being part of a military burial detail is considered by many to be one of the highest forms of respect a Soldier can bestow on a comrade who has fallen in the line of duty, or to retirees who served long ago.

While assigned to the detail, Soldiers remain in a state of readiness, practicing and training for the time when they're called upon to render the silent honor. They must be ready within 24 hours of notification to perform a ceremony. Reserve units assigned to the detail must be available within 48 hours.

Recently, Soldiers from the 1st Corps Support Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., performed a military funeral service at the Sandhills State Veteran's Cemetery in Spring Lake, N.C. 🇺🇸



▲ Soldiers stand at parade rest while waiting for the start of the funeral ceremony.



▲ Members of the detail from Fort Bragg prepare to fire a three-round-volley during the funeral.



▲ SFC Tim Allen (left) and SSG David Mansilla lead members of the detail as they march at the beginning of the funeral.



Mail photo submissions for Sharp Shooters to:
Photo Editor, Soldiers
9325 Gunston Road, Ste. S108
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581
Digital images should be directed to:
lisa.gregory@belvoir.army.mil.
All submissions must include an introductory paragraph and captions.

▲ CW3 Donald McClung presents a flag to Pat Barkhurst at a funeral service for her late husband, retired CW3 William Barkhurst.



▲ SSG David Mansilla (right) and SPC Edith Criner fold a flag during the service at Sandhills State Veteran's Cemetery.

ARE YOU WEARING YOURS RIGHT?

A photo survey by the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory indicates that roughly half of Soldiers serving in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom are wearing the ground combat helmet improperly.

Helmets fitted or worn improperly put Soldiers at increased risk of injury due to ballistic threats or concussion. In most of these cases, helmets have been found to be too small.

— Program Executive Office Soldier

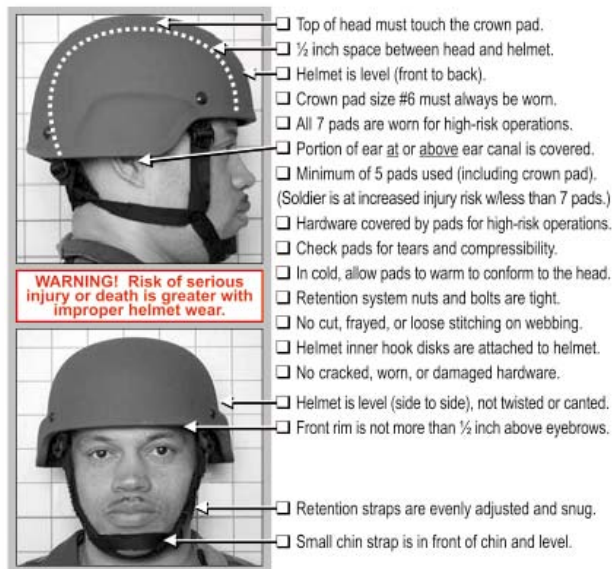


Check out images of correct and incorrect wear, as well as a fitting-procedures video, at www.peosoldier.army.mil.

ACH PROPER WEAR AND ADJUSTMENT



PASGT PROPER WEAR AND ADJUSTMENT



Jonathan Lewis touchdown photo by SPC Eric S. Bartlett

BLACK KNIGHTS 2005 SCHEDULE

Go Army! The U.S. Military Academy "Black Knights" kick off their 2005 football season Sept. 10 at Boston College.

The team was to open its season Sept. 3, but schedule changes have balanced home and away games and put the team "in a much better position to be successful," said Army Director of Athletics Kevin Anderson.

Fans may purchase tickets by calling (877) TIX-ARMY, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you can't make the game, you may listen to it on Soldiers Radio at www.army.mil/srtv/SoldiersRadio/SRL.html.

— Army News Service



Day	Date	Opponent	Location
Sat	09/10/2005	at Boston College	Chestnut Hill, Mass.
Sat	09/17/2005	BAYLOR	West Point, N.Y.
Sat	09/23/2005	IOWA STATE	West Point, N.Y.
Sat	10/01/2005	CONNECTICUT	West Point, N.Y.
Sat	10/08/2005	CENTRAL MICHIGAN	West Point, N.Y.
Sat	10/15/2005	at TCU	Fort Worth, Texas
Sat	10/22/2005	at Akron	Akron, Ohio
Sat	11/05/2005	at Air Force	USAF, Colo.
Sat	11/12/2005	MASSACHUSETTS	West Point, N.Y.
Sat	11/19/2005	ARKANSAS STATE	West Point, N.Y.
Sat	12/03/2005	vs. Navy	Philadelphia, Pa.



Visit the Army Athletic Association's Web site at www.goarmysports.collegesports.com.

POW/MIA

THOUSANDS STILL MISSING

POW/MIA Recognition Day, Sept. 19, honors the commitment and sacrifices of America's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action.

The Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office oversees the recovery and identification of the remains of Americans who never returned from foreign battlefields, and those who are isolated, captured, detained or otherwise missing.

More than 78,000 Americans are still missing from World War II, many lost at sea or buried with full military honors in national cemeteries as "unknowns."

More than 8,100 American service members never returned from the Korean War. Some men were buried in North Korea in temporary cemeteries or died in captivity. The bodies of many others could not be recovered at the time of death. Others simply disappeared, their fates unknown.

More than 1,800 American service members and civilians remain missing from the Vietnam War. One U.S. loss remains unresolved from the 1991 Gulf War, as does one from the global war on terror. — *Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office*



Munich

OKTOBERFEST

STATIONED in Europe? Don't miss the world's largest volksfest. The 2005 Oktoberfest takes place in Munich Sept. 17 through Oct. 1, and will feature beer tents, oompah bands, food booths and carnival rides.



The first Oktoberfest was held in October 1810 to honor the marriage of Bavarian Crown Prince Ludwig to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen. The celebration continued in following years, and was eventually prolonged and moved to September because temperatures were warmer.

The event's main highlight is the Oktoberfest Costume and Riflemen's Parade, which will occur Sept. 19.

For more information on current and future Oktoberfests, go to www.Oktoberfest.de.

Doonesbury

THE LONG ROAD HOME

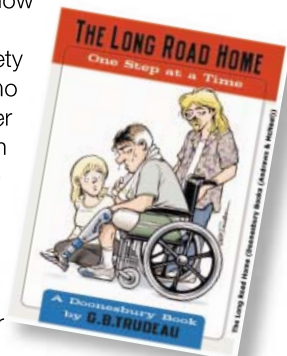
ON the battlefields of Iraq thousands of Soldiers have endured shattering losses that forever changed their lives. Their struggles were mirrored by G.B. Trudeau's well-known comic strip character B.D., a husband, father, former football star and National Guard Soldier.

Trudeau's "The Long Road Home: One Step at a Time" collects the first seven months of Doonesbury strips about B.D.'s journey after he loses a leg in Fallujah in April 2004. It follows B.D. from a medical triage point in Baghdad to a Stateside hospital, where he endures awkward visits from friends, agonizing exercise regimens and gatherings with fellow amputees.

The story also depicts the anxiety of B.D.'s family and friends, who support him by staying at a Fisher House — a non-profit organization operated by Fisher House Foundation to give housing to families of Soldiers receiving treatment at major military hospitals.

All royalties from "The Long Road Home" will go to the Fisher House Foundation.

— Andrews McMeel Publishing



Mississippi Sergeant

RICHARD Anthony will not soon forget how he was promoted to sergeant in the Mississippi Army National Guard. It happened just before noon outside the headquarters of the 155th Brigade Combat Team at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq.

LTG H. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, cut a specialist insignia from Anthony's collar and promoted him to the next higher rank on the spot, after hearing how Anthony had helped save the lives of four other Guard Soldiers the day before.

"I didn't know what to think. That really surprised me," said the newly promoted sergeant, who at mid-day chow showed his friends the personal coins that he got from Blum and CSM John Leonard Jr., Blum's senior enlisted adviser.

It was a meritorious promotion, said Blum, who takes advantage of every opportunity to praise and promote Guard Soldiers during visits to distant combat zones. He made it clear that someone should

get on with processing Anthony's paperwork.

Blum and his traveling companion, Mississippi Congressman Gene Taylor, were particularly taken by Anthony's story because it underscored the importance

of the combat-lifesaving course that many Soldiers are taking before they deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Anthony, a military policeman from New Albany, Miss., said he was traveling in the third vehicle of a




convoy the previous morning when the Humvee behind him struck an antitank mine.

"I looked back and saw the Humvee come out of a cloud of dust and smoke and roll on its side," Anthony recalled. "We ran back to help and saw four Soldiers lying around the Humvee. They had all been thrown from the vehicle."

One of them, SPC William Brooks, suffered injuries to both legs. He was the most seriously injured of the four. Anthony and SSG Mackiel Burcham applied tourniquets to Brooks' legs to stop the bleeding. They did their best to keep him calm and tried to find a vein that hadn't collapsed so they could insert an I.V. needle.

"Everything happened fast," Anthony said. "By the time we got the tourniquets on, the helicopters were there and took the wounded away. All four of them lived, and I'm glad we could save them."

Brooks did lose his left leg and part of his right, Blum learned later, but at least he was alive.

Blum credited the Soldiers' combat medical training with making the difference. He promoted Anthony for doing what he had been trained to do. 

Blum credited the Soldiers' combat medical training with making the difference.

MSG Bob Haskell works for the National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Office in Arlington, Va.



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